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ABSTRACT

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) Commission on Schools appointed a task force to develop proposed standards and devise different accreditation procedures for optional and special function schools. The task force was instructed to formulate accreditation standards and procedures that would not impose a sterile uniformity on these schools, but at the same time would permit meaningful decisions to be made concerning the quality of their educational programs. The standards contained in this booklet were adopted by the commission on March 27, 1974. (Author/MLF)

POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF OPTIONAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL FUNCTION SCHOOLS

1974-1975

ED 102476

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POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF OPTIONAL SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL FUNCTION SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

In recent years the concept of educational choice (optional schools, alternative schools—call them what you will) has penetrated deeply into the American system of education. It seems likely that in the foreseeable future many different types of schools will exist side by side within the total educational structure, each designed to meet a different set of specified learning and living needs of young people. These schools will not be competitive with nor antagonistic to one another, but rather will be complementary in effort and thrust, helping American education redeem its long-term commitment to the fullest education of every child.

While the standard school certainly will continue to be the major institution in American education, it will not be the exclusive one. Other types of schools will develop, seeking to provide more fully for the total educational needs of the community. Widespread educational options —the coexistence of many types of alternative schools and programs—should strengthen American education as a whole.

All schools, whether self-designated as optional or not, need some control of quality. All schools must meet certain essential conditions and provide certain educational good, no matter how conventional or how experimental they seek to be. In American education, this effort to give the public some assurance of quality has in the main been provided by the regional accrediting associations on a voluntary and non-governmental basis.

In light of the diversity that optional schools display, however, it is evident that the established procedures and the general standards of the NCA Commission on Schools would be neither appropriate nor fully applicable to all such schools. Moreover, there is another category of schools—special function schools—that falls outside the quality control parameters so carefully constructed for standard types of schools. Such institutions as choir schools, schools in corrective institutions, drop-in schools, and street academies are cases in point.

In recognition of these facts, in December of 1972 the NCA Commission on Schools appointed a Task Force to develop proposed standards and devise different accreditation procedures for these schools categorized as optional or special function. The Task Force was instructed to formulate accreditation standards and procedures that

would not impose a sterile uniformity on these schools, but at the same time would permit meaningful decisions to be made concerning the quality of their educational programs. The proposed standards were adopted by the Commission on March 25, 1974.

Several aspects of these standards should be noted carefully:

1. They have been designated for optional and special function schools only. They are not appropriate for standard schools of any category.
2. The standards are qualitative in nature. The school will be required to demonstrate how it is meeting the intent of each of these requirements rather than the stated conditions as is true in all other NCA sets of standards.
3. The election of this set of standards as the avenue to NCA accreditation imposes on the school the need for an initial examination by a board of NCA examiners and a similar examination every three years thereafter. Accreditation will be granted and continued only on the basis of these examinations.
4. These schools will file annual reports, but those reports will be analyzed solely to determine whether any substantive changes have occurred in the school. Accreditation will be for a multiple-year term, contingent upon the three-year examination, as noted above.
5. Neither these special standards nor the accreditation procedures involved should be considered as being less rigorous than the other avenues to NCA Commission on Schools accreditation. True, they are quite different, in keeping with the nature of these schools, but they still impose on the school the need to provide effective education.

Section A—POLICIES

Policies are the adopted procedures and guides to be followed by the Commission on Schools in accrediting member schools. The member school has the responsibility of adhering to those policies directly applicable to it.

Policy I. Definition of Schools Qualifying Under These Standards

An optional school is one that offers students an alternative to the standard school program. It may be either a public or a non-public school. A school designed to meet the educational needs of a particular group of students under very special circumstances also falls under these standards as a special function school.

An optional school must offer a complete educational program for the students it serves. However, a special function school offering only a partial program may be accredited under these standards if its particular offerings constitute an integral part of the student's regular elementary or secondary school program, with the remainder of the program being completed elsewhere.

Public schools established to serve all students within defined attendance areas, college preparatory schools, general program non-public schools, and vocational/occupational secondary schools may not qualify under these standards. Alternative educational programs offered within or through a standard school may not be accredited under these standards, since those programs would be covered by the accreditation of the encompassing school.

The Commission on Schools shall make the final determination of the eligibility of a school to apply for accreditation under these standards.

Policy II. Accreditation of Special Function Schools

A special function school seeking accreditation under these standards must specify clearly the special function or unusual circumstances that enjoin a special program for the school. Its students must be selected on the basis of the school's expressed special function and the supporting program for the particular needs of those students.

The school must comply with each of the established standards wherever they are applicable to its operation. If the school feels a standard does not apply to its particular situation, it must explain fully its rationale for that exclusion. The rationale will be subject to the review and approval of the Commission on Schools.

Policy III. Non-Discriminatory Selection of Students

A school seeking NCA membership under these standards shall not discriminate in the selection of its students

on the basis of race, ethnic origin, or socio-economic level. Nor shall it discriminate on the basis of religion, unless the school is officially church related and wishes to recruit its students mainly from communicants of that denomination.

Policy IV. Period of Accreditation

A member school accredited under these standards will be accredited for an initial three-year period, including the year the school is admitted into NCA membership. Thereafter, it will be accredited for three-year periods. However, its certificate of membership shall be valid as long as the school continues to satisfy the conditions for accreditation established by the Commission on Schools.

To be eligible for NCA accreditation, the school must be fully approved or accredited by the legally constituted or recognized educational agency in its state, if applicable.

When a school loses its approval or accreditation by the legally constituted or recognized accrediting agency within the state, it becomes subject to the usual Accredited-Warned and Dropped procedures.

A school admitted during the annual meeting will be considered accredited for the entire year.

Policy V. Review of Annual Reports by State Committees and the Commission on Schools

1. A school desiring to continue membership in the Association under these standards shall submit an annual report and such supplementary reports as the Commission on Schools finds necessary in order to accredit schools.

2. Each fall the State Chairman for each state shall distribute the annual report forms with supplementary instructions and suggestions, check the receipt of reports, and make an initial review of the reports in preparation for review by the State Committee. The State Committee shall examine the annual reports from member schools and make recommendations to the Commission for its consideration during the review of the status of all member schools at the annual meeting of the Association in the spring. The accreditation status of the member school covered by these standards shall not be based on the annual report, but on the periodic examination. However, should the annual report or other information indicate such substantive or fundamental changes in the school as to suggest a special examination, the State Committee may so require a re-examination of the school before the next Annual Meeting.

3. It shall be the policy of the Commission not to take an action affecting the accreditation of a member school which is different from that recommended by the State Committee without first consulting with the State Chairman.
4. Each member school in its annual report to the Commission is required to list all violations of standards cited the previous year, and to indicate what action has been taken to correct the deficiencies.

Policy VI. Accreditation and the Composite Effectiveness of the School

1. The member school shall be judged on the basis of its total effectiveness in meeting the educational needs of its students. Although it is a purpose of an accrediting association to develop certain basic standards for the approval of schools, it is recognized by the Commission that desirable variations will occur in the purposes and programs of institutions. Standards and procedures should be sufficiently flexible to provide for these variations within a framework of common preconditions for quality education.
2. The school shall be accredited under these standards on the basis of the recommendations of a board of examiners appointed by the State Chairman. These recommendations shall be reviewed by the State Committee and the Commission on Schools.
3. The board of examiners shall consist of at least three members (one from outside the state) appointed by the State Chairman. The expenses of the examiners shall be paid by the school being examined. The examiners shall remain in the school as long as necessary to assess it thoroughly, but two days shall be considered a minimum period for the examination.
4. In preparation for the examination, the school shall document in writing how it is meeting the intent of each standard.
5. The Commission on Schools, through research and study, shall continue to seek to improve its standards to make them stimulative and conducive to the educational advancement of its member optional schools and special function schools.

Policy VII. School Evaluation

1. In order to stimulate member schools toward continued improvement in the development of quality programs, each member school shall be evaluated at

least once each seven-year cycle, using some appropriate evaluation instrument approved by the Commission. These materials shall be used on a self-study basis, to be followed by an NCA evaluation team of sufficient size which remains an adequate length of time in the school to observe all phases of its program.

2. When the evaluation coincides with a scheduled examination of the school, the two processes may be carried out simultaneously.

   Explanatory Note: A typical schedule might be:

   1974-75 Year of initial accreditation, examination.
   1975-76 Continuing accreditation.
   1976-77 Continuing accreditation.
   1977-78 Re-examination.
   1978-79 Continuing accreditation.
   1979-80 Continuing accreditation.
   1980-81 Re-examination and full evaluation.
   1981-82 Continuing accreditation.
   (. . . and so forth.)

3. A member school shall be evaluated, insofar as is possible, in terms of its stated purposes and objectives, provided these are in harmony with the particular needs of its students and are in accord with the requirements and expectations of the community, the state, and the nation.

4. Following each evaluation, the principal shall file with the State Committee one-year and three-year progress reports concerning the extent to which the school has been using the results of the school evaluation for self-improvement. This is not a requirement to quantify the number of recommendations implemented or rejected but to report on the steps taken to resolve the major limitations disclosed by the evaluation process or to build new strengths deemed desirable by the school.

Policy VIII. Classification of Schools for Accreditation

The accreditation status of the member school under these standards shall be determined by an initial examination prior to admission into the North Central Association. That accreditation shall be for three years, inclusive of the year the school is admitted into NCA membership. The school shall be accredited for three-year periods thereafter, based on direct re-examination of the school. The State Committee or the Commission may require a special re-examination at any time if a question arises as to the advisability of continuing the school in an accredited status.

On the basis of its examination, a member school shall be classified under one of the following categories:

1. Accredited

   A school should be classified as Accredited when it meets fully the requirements of all policies and standards or when, in the opinion of the State Committee and/or the Commission, it fails to meet one or more of the policies and standards and the resulting deficiency does not detract to a serious degree from the quality of the school's educational program.

2. Accredited Warned

   A school shall be classified as Accredited Warned when, in the judgment of the State Committee and/or the Commission (a) it fails to meet one or more of the policies and standards and the resulting deficiency seriously detracts from the quality of the school's educational program, (b) it consistently fails to remedy or make substantial progress toward removing all deficiencies noted the previous year, (c) it consistently violates policies and standards, or (d) when it deliberately and unnecessarily violates one or more of the standards.

Notes:

1. *The period of warning is for one academic year. If at the end of the year the cause for warning has not been corrected, the school will be dropped from membership in the Association, except under extraordinary circumstances when a second warning may be given. A second warning may be given only by means of a three-fourths majority of the members of the Commission present at the annual business meeting.*
2. *When all schools within the district are warned for a violation beyond the control of the individual school, such as the deterioration of board/staff relationships, the warning shall not be additive as far as the individual school is concerned. Only under the most extenuating circumstances will a second warning be granted for a district-wide violation.*

3. Withdrawn or Discontinued

   A school which voluntarily requests to withdraw or is discontinued will be classified as "Withdrawn" or "Discontinued" for the records of the Association.

4. Dropped

   A school which finds it impossible to meet the standards or refuses to do so in successive years, may be dropped from membership. A school shall not be dropped without a one-year warning if it has been accredited continuously for five years, except by a three-fourths majority vote of the members of the Commission present at the annual business meeting.

Policy IX. Responsibilities of the State Committees and State Chairman

1. State Committees are the agencies of the Commission on Schools responsible for making decisions and recommendations relative to the standing of member schools. In addition to receiving and examining reports from schools and making recommendations to the Commission, State Committees have the responsibility of working with member schools to assist them to meet satisfactorily or to exceed the provisions of the standards.

2. The Chairman of each State Committee is the official agent of communication between the schools in that state and the Commission on Schools. He is responsible to the Commission for the distribution, collection, and filing of all reports, and for such other duties as the Commission may define. (See Section E II also.)
(Note: The word *Chairman* is used in its generic sense throughout these policies and standards; it specifically includes both sexes.)

3. All State Committee members are members of the Commission on Schools.

4. Each State Committee and State Chairman shall be responsible for establishing a cycle for the examination of member schools, as required by these policies. They also shall be required to establish a seven-year schedule for the evaluation of member schools.

Policy X. Application of General Standards

Wherever the operation of the school converges with the other schools in the district, NCA standards relating to those common areas shall be observed in full. (The standards for the common areas are those noted in the *Policies and Standards for the Approval of Secondary Schools*.) Examples would be the qualifications established for the superintendent of the district and for general board/staff relationships.

Section B—STANDARDS

Rationale for the Standards

These standards are qualitative statements indicating the levels the school must attain or the requirements the school must observe to be eligible for accreditation. If the school's practice deviates considerably from the norm established by the standards, the school must be prepared to explain how it is seeking to meet the intent of the standards and to sustain the quality of its program.

STANDARD 1

Institutional Purpose

A school has the responsibility of serving the educational needs of its students within a democratic society. In order to establish priorities, aid in decision making, and provide an effective basis for comprehensive and continuous evaluation, each member school develops and maintains a written statement of its philosophy and the major purposes to be served by the educational program.

The school's statement of institutional purpose is expressed clearly, is representative of faculty, student, and community thinking, and has been approved by the school's governing board.

The statement reflects the individual character of the school, indicating its special purposes. It reflects the characteristics and the needs of the students it serves.

Provisions are made for the periodic review and appropriate modification of the statement of purposes as the needs and characteristics of society and its students change.

STANDARD II

Organization, Administration, Control, and Decision-Making

The relationships between the school and its governing body are effective in helping the school carry out its major purposes. Relationships between the school and above-school administration are such as to support the school's program. The administration of the school has the necessary authority and autonomy needed to assure the achievement of the stated purposes of the school.

The school is organized to assure the maximum achievement of its stated purposes. Optional schools and special-function schools may assume a variety of organizational forms. The test of the organizational structure is whether it facilitates the achievement of the school's stated purposes.

The relationships between the school and the above-school administration have been defined clearly in full recognition of the unique characteristics and needs of the school. Policies pertaining to the discretionary authority of the administration of the school have been clearly determined.

The school functions in a fashion that assures the involvement of students, staff, parents, and community in the major facets of its decision-making. The needed structure for shared decision-making and decision-implementation is specific and well defined.

The school has the authority to administer its discretionary budget. The school is significantly involved in the selection, assignment, and retention of all its personnel. The school has been granted the discretionary authority to develop its program and processes, subject to the approval of the central administration.

The school enrolls an appropriate number of students and employs an adequate staff, both professional and non-certificated, to enable it to realize its stated purposes.

The school maintains a school day and a school year in accord with its stated purposes.

The school has established procedures for granting credit and for determining progress/graduation which are based on sound professional judgment and are consistent with the school's stated purposes. The statement is in writing, and students, staff, and parents are acquainted with it.

The school maintains adequate records and reports regarding students, staff, and program that are meaningful in terms of the educational purposes of the school.

The school records educational experiences on the student's transcript so that they can be interpreted readily

by others after the student graduates or leaves the school.

In all cases relative to organization, administration, and control, the school shall meet all applicable state requirements and regulations, unless official exemption has been granted by the state authorities.

STANDARD III

Educational Program

The educational program is developed from the school's stated goals and objectives and from a knowledge of the unique needs of its students. The program is designed to carry out the educational purpose of the school.

The school's program is designed to develop feelings of self-acceptance and self-worth; to develop the talents and competencies of each individual; and to develop the basic skills. The program assists the students in coping with changing environments; it encourages the student to take an active role in the determination of society's alternative futures; and it enables the student to make more responsible decisions concerning his/her future.

The scope of the school's program of studies is such as to meet adequately within the context of its stated purposes the educational and developmental (affective, cognitive, psychomotor) needs of the students it admits.

An inservice program is provided to stimulate ongoing appraisal and improvement of the educational program.

STANDARD IV

Student Selection and Individual Assessment

The school defines clearly its program and its expectations for students so that the family can make an appropriate and informed choice.

The school has established clearly defined admissions procedures for the selection of its students. These procedures are made known to all potential students and their parents.

Enrollment in the school is voluntary. The school has established procedures to permit the parents to withdraw the student at their discretion and to allow the student to enter another school or program without prejudice.

Whenever feasible, the student body is selected so as to reflect the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic mix of the community the school serves.

The school's program, curriculum, and learning environments are designed specifically for its defined and selected student population.

The school provides careful diagnoses of the needs of the individual student relative to skill development, social and personal development, and talent development. The school then makes appropriate provision for meeting these needs of the individual student.

The school uses student evaluation procedures that are consistent with its stated goals and objectives.

STANDARD V

Professional Staff

The school is staffed by teachers who are well qualified in professional and subject matter areas, who are actively encouraged by the school system to improve their teaching competencies, who are involved in the important areas of decision-making affecting the school program, and who teach under conditions favorable to good morale.

Teachers and other professional staff members hold baccalaureate degrees from regionally accredited institutions, meet the legal standards (for teaching and for the professional staff positions they hold) of the state in which they are employed, and fulfill standard NCA course credit requirements.[1]

If permitted by the state governing agency, the school may employ teachers and other professional staff personnel on the basis of factors other than the established credentials, provided those teachers have demonstrated competency in teaching students at that particular level, display proficiency in their assigned areas, and have been selected for their particular appropriateness for operation within that particular educational program and their ability to relate to the particular students enrolled in the school.

When appointments are made of teachers or other professional staff members who do not meet state certification and/or NCA course credit requirements, the basis for the decision to employ must be stated explicitly. Such nonqualified (by state and NCA standards) professional staff members are not to exceed twenty-five percent of the staff, computed on a full-time equivalency basis.

All professional staff members are selected on the recommendation of the administrative head of the school. Selection is based on the respective qualifications of the applicants for the educational program in effect in the school and upon the expressed willingness of the applicants to teach in this particular school.

Policies for staff selection and assignment are nondiscriminatory in reference to race, ethnic origin, or sex.

Staff members are given careful and adequate orientation to the specific professional requirements of the particular educational program offered by the school. They

[1] *These are the requirements detailed in the pertinent sections of the* Policies and Standards for the Approval of Secondary Schools *and* Policies and Standards for the Approval of Junior High/Middle Schools, *published annually by the Commission and included as Appendix A of these present standards. When standards for elementary schools are adopted, the NCA requirements for elementary teachers shall apply to optional schools and special function schools at the elementary level.*

also receive continuing support and assistance beyond this initial orientation.

The administrative head of the school has earned the master's degree, with adequate preparation in administration, curriculum, supervision, and related fields.

Above-school administrators meet the NCA requirements established for those positions.

Salaries and professional working conditions for all professional staff members are at least comparable to those prevailing elsewhere in the district.

Paraprofessionals and aides may be used in the school wherever appropriate and legally permissible.

STANDARD VI

School Climate

The school provides a positive social and academic climate which enhances and strengthens the student's self esteem and academic performance.

The school fosters in its students an understanding of the divergent value systems that are integral to our pluralistic democratic society.

The school encourages supportive norms for accomplishing academic work, but it provides considerable latitude to accommodate diverse styles of learning.

The school encourages open communication among staff, students, and community. Large amounts of dialogue and feedback characterize the communication.

The school fosters a sense of belonging and feelings of security among its students.

There is significant involvement of students in academic pursuits.

STANDARD VII

The Community Context

The school seeks to establish its own community by involving students, staff, parents, and other local people in its decision making, as well as in various cooperative efforts.

The school considers the interests of the broader community in the development and the operation of its program.

Where consistent with its program, the school utilizes people and places in its broader community as legitimate resources for learning and other school activities.

The school's program recognizes the potential relationships of its students with the state, the nation, and the world community.

STANDARD VIII

Student Services

The school makes provision for access to the persons, facilities, materials, and services required to meet the specialized needs of all its students.

The school provides guidance services, including counseling, appraisal, and educational planning. While various approaches to guidance services are to be encouraged, including differentiated staffing and the use of off site services, at least one professional staff member with appropriate preparation bears direct responsibility for the direction and coordination of the guidance services.

The school provides or makes available other supportive services, such as social services and health services, required by the needs of its particular students.

The school provides individualized assistance that enables each student to work toward functioning at maximum potential, including the students with needs for special education.

The school has a plan for medical examinations to identify students with health problems. It maintains adequate health records for its students.

STANDARD IX

Learning Resources Program

A coordinated learning resource program makes available a wide array of human and material resources for students and teachers. The program supports learning through the adequate provision of appropriate and other pertinent instructional/learning resources.

The resources are of such diversity and variety as to foster the individualization of learning. The learning resource program derives from the philosophy and objectives of the educational program. Staff and students participate in the selection of learning resources.

A professional staff member with appropriate preparation has been designated to coordinate the total learning resource program. The coordinator is directly involved in all major curriculum and instructional planning in the school. The coordinator has access to sufficient clerical assistance.

Sufficient financial provisions are made for the development and the operation of the learning resource program.

The school has adopted a policy statement concerning the selection and use of textbooks, other learning materials, instructional materials, and library materials. The policy statement has been approved by the board of education.

The physical facilities available for the learning resource program are adequate.

Note:

The school may share instructional/learning resource services with other institutions or learning centers when this is deemed feasible and desirable in light of the school's educational commitments. However, those services must be readily accessible to the staff and students of the school.

STANDARD X

Institutional Evaluation

Each member school continuously and systematically collects and analyzes information about the progress of the school towards its goals. It has developed a specific and organized plan for this ongoing evaluation.

This evaluation program serves the following purposes:

- To provide continuous information on the progress of individual students in the program. The methods for collecting this information are consistent with the program's goals and purposes.
- To provide continuous information about the progress of the program towards its stated goals, for use in internal program planning and development.
- To provide meaningful information about the progress of the program for distribution to the school's various constituencies.

After its initial accreditation, the school undergoes a comprehensive evaluation, including a thorough self-study and an on-site evaluation by an external team, at least once each seven-year cycle.

STANDARD XI

Financial Support and Control

Financial support is sufficient to provide the staff, facilities, and materials needed to accomplish the school's purposes.

The determination of the school's funding is based on its unique needs and purposes, and not solely on standard district-wide ratios.

Proper budgetary procedures are followed in accounting for all school funds.

The school's accounts are audited annually, or as otherwise required by state law.

Adequate safekeeping of the school's funds is provided.

STANDARD XII

School Facilities

The school facilities are so located and constructed to afford desirable learning conditions which enhance achievement of the school's goals and objectives. The facilities assure that the health and safety of those served by the school are properly safeguarded.

A variety of locations and types of buildings is acceptable to house the school, provided the facilities actually in use are appropriate for the school's educational program and meet the legally required safety standards.

The site is accessible to the school population. It is safe and free from possible health and traffic hazards. It is extensive enough to meet the designated needs of the school.

The facility is clean, attractive, and in good repair.

Recognized standards and legal requirements for heating, ventilation and illumination are observed.

Adequate space is provided for areas to serve the purposes of the school—such as classrooms, meeting rooms, and specialized instructional and non-instructional areas. Adequate and appropriate space for storage, materials preparation, teachers, and consultation shall be provided.

Proper precautions are taken to protect students and employees from injuries in laboratories, shops, gymnasiums, stairways, and in all other parts of the facility in which accidents are likely to occur.

There are regular inspections for fire safety by official fire and police inspectors. All legal requirements for fire safety are observed, and fire drills are required at least twice each semester.

Section C

Amendment Procedures for These Standards

(The following procedures for the amendment of these standards were adopted by the Commission on Schools, March 25, 1974.)

1. A proposed amendment to the *Policies and Standards for Optional Schools and Special Function Schools* may be submitted by the State Committee, provided six optional school/special function school member principals in the state sign the petition specifying the particular amendment.

2. A State Committee may, if it so desires, initiate specific amendments of its own.

3. The State Committee shall pass the petition of amendment to the Liaison Committee for Optional Schools/Special Function Schools at its fall meeting, accompanied by one of these three recommendations:

   (a) Endorsed (b)Not Endorsed (c) On Its Merits (No recommendation)

4. The LCOS/SFS is to consider the proposed amendment, making its own recommendation on it. It then shall pass the proposed amendment to the Administrative Committee at its December meeting.

5. The LCOS/SFS may submit proposed amendments of its own, provided they are proposed unanimously by that committee and are submitted to the Administrative Committee at its December meeting.

6. At its December meeting, the Administrative Committee shall consider specific amendments of its own at its December meeting.

7. The Administrative Committee, if it so desires, may initiate specific amendments of its own at its December meeting.

8. After the December meeting of the Administrative Committee, the Executive Secretary shall notify each member of the Commission on Schools of all the proposed amendments (and the various recommendations accompanying them) that are to be submitted to the Commission on Schools at the forthcoming Annual Meeting. This notification shall be made at least one month prior to the Annual Meeting.

9. Each proposed amendment, along with the recommendations of the State Committee, the LCOS/SFS, and the Administrative Committee, is to be submitted to the Commission on Schools at its annual busi-

ness meeting. The Commission by a simple majority vote may take one of five actions:

a. Adopt the amendment as submitted.

b. Reject the amendment as submitted.

c. Amend the proposal, then adopt it as amended.

d. Defer action until the next annual business meeting.

e. Submit the proposed amendment to an advisory referendum vote of the membership. Formal action then would be taken by the Commission at the next annual business meeting.

10. A proposal for the substantive revision (extensive reformulation) of these *Policies and Standards for Optional Schools/Special Function Schools* must first be recommended by the Administrative Committee then affirmed by the Commission on Schools.

Section D—APPEALS PROCEDURES

(These procedures for appeals were adopted by the Commission on March 29, 1971 as part of its general policy statement on due process.)

I. Appeals by Members Schools

A member school is accorded the right to appear before its State Committee or the Commission on Schools to contest any recommendation or decision for its disaccreditation.

The procedures to be followed are:

A. Appeal from the Decision of the State Committee to Recommend Disaccreditation

1. The school is to be notified in writing of the proposed recommendation for disaccreditation and the reasons for that recommendation at least three weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Commission on Schools.
2. The school may request to have its representative(s) appear before the State Committee, or a subcommittee thereof authorized to act on behalf of the State Committee, to lodge an appeal or to submit additional evidence. This meeting must be held at least one week prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
3. A school wishing to contest the State Committee's decision beyond this point may make application to the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools to have its representative(s) appear before the Commission when the status of the school is being considered at the Annual Business Meeting. The intention of the school to make this appeal must be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary no less than forty-eight hours before the session of the Annual Business Meeting at which the accreditation of schools is to be considered.

B. Appeal from a Decision of the Commission on Schools to Disaccredit the School

1. The present procedures for requesting reconsideration by the Board of Directors for cases of alleged departure from established procedures, bias, injustice, or for the presentation of evidence not originally offered at the time of the consideration of the accreditation of the school shall remain in full effect. (See III below.)
2. A school may also appeal to the Commission on Schools the decision to disaccredit the school.

This appeal can be made on the grounds of misapplication of membership standards, reconsideration of the quality of the school as justification for its continued membership in the NCA, or for any other reasons apart from those justifying an appeal directly to the Board of Directors.

3. The appeal shall be filed with the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools not less than ten nor more than thirty days after the Annual Meeting.
4. The appeal shall state the specific reasons for seeking a reversal of the decision to disaccredit.
5. A panel of three impartial educators shall be selected in this manner: (a) one by the Administrative Committee of the Commission on Schools; (b) one by the NCA Board of Directors; (c) one by the State Committee.
   Efforts shall be made to enlist the services of respected school educators who are knowlegeable about NCA accreditation but who are not immediately involved with NCA activities in any elected or appointed post at either the state or the regional level.
6. The administration of the school may veto the selections made by the Administrative Committee and/or the State Committee, but it may not nominate panelists of its own.
7. The expenses of the panel members are to be borne in this ratio: two-thirds by the appellant school and one-third by the Commission on Schools. No honoraria nor fees are to be given the panel members.
8. The panel shall hold a hearing within three weeks of the time the appeal is filed, at which hearing the school may plead its case and submit whatever additional evidence it wishes.
9. The recommendation of the panel is to be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its June meeting, at which time the State Chairman and representatives from the school may be present.
10. The Administrative Committee is to reach a decision on the appeal at its June meeting. That decision shall determine the appellant school's accreditation status for the school year, as far as the Commission on Schools is concerned.

This procedure will exhaust the procedural relief offered a member school faced with disaccreditation, as far as the Commission on Schools is involved.

II. Appeal by a Non-Member School Denied NCA Membership

A non-member school may appeal the decision to reject its application for membership by following these procedures:

A. Appeal from the Negative Recommendation of a State Committee

1. The school is to be notified in writing of the State Committee's intention not to recommend accreditation and the specific reasons for this rejection of its membership application at least three weeks prior to the Annual Business Meeting of the Commission on Schools.
2. The school may request to have its representative(s) appear before the State Committee, or a subcommittee thereof authorized to act on behalf of the State Committee, to present its case. This hearing must be conducted at least one week prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
3. If the applying school requests, its application, along with the State Committee's recommendation for rejection and the reasons therefor, is to be submitted to the reviewing committee process at the Annual Meeting, then presented to the Commission on Schools for its action.
4. The applying school is entitled to have its representative(s) appear before the Commission on Schools to argue its brief prior to formal action by the Commission. The request of the school for time on the agenda of the Annual Business Meeting to present its case must be filed with the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools at least forty-eight hours before the session of the Annual Business Meeting at which the application of the school for membership is to be acted upon.

B. Appeal from a Negative Decision of the Commission on Schools

A school may appeal a rejection of its membership application by the Commission on Schools on the basis of alleged departure from established procedures, bias, injustice, misapplication of membership standards, or for the presentation of additional evidence relating to its eligibility for NCA membership.

1. The appeal shall be filed with the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools not less

than ten nor more than thirty days after the Annual Meeting.

2. The appeal shall state specifically the reasons for seeking a reversal of the rejection of the application for membership.
3. A panel of three impartial educators shall be selected in this manner: (a) one by the Administrative Committee of the Commission on Schools; (b) one by the NCA Board of Directors; (c) one by the State Committee.
   Efforts shall be made to enlist the services of respected school educators who are knowledgeable about NCA accreditation but who are not immediately involved in NCA activities in any elected or appointed post at either the state or regional level.
4. The administration of the appelant school shall have no power of veto over these selections.
5. The expenses of the panelists are to be borne fully by the appelant school, but the panelists are not to receive honoraria or fees.
6. The panel must hold a hearing within three weeks of the time the appeal is filed, at which hearing the school may present its case and submit whatever additional information it wishes.
7. The recommendation of the panel is to be submitted to the Administrative Committee at its June meeting, at which time the State Chairman and representatives from the school may be present.
8. The Administrative Committee's decision, to be reached at that June meeting, shall be final for that school year, as far as the Commission on Schools is concerned.
9. No appeal of the school applying for membership may be submitted to the Board of Directors, since only member schools may have access to the Board.

III. Requests to the Board of Directors for Reconsideration of Decisions of the Association

A member school has the right to present a request for reconsideration of the classification given to it by the action of the State Committee and the Commission on Schools. If a school so desires, it should submit a written request, signed by the administrative head of the school and the president of the governing board, to the Secretary of the Association. The exact procedure follows:

1. Requests for reconsideration of decisions of the Association shall be filed with the Secretary of the Association not sooner than 10 days and not more than 30 days following the meeting at which the decisions were made and shall represent official action of the governing bodies of the institutions concerned. The basis for such requests for reconsideration shall be alleged bias, injustice, departure from established procedures, or factual error of sufficient magnitude to warrant reconsideration of the decision. Such allegations shall be supported by evidence in writing, submitted by the institution making the request.
2. The Secretary of the Association shall transmit a request for reconsideration to the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools who shall submit the request to the Administrative Committee.
3. The Administrative Committee, or a committee appointed by the Chairman to report its findings to the Administrative Committee, shall consider the allegations of bias, injustice, departure from established procedure, or factual error of sufficient magnitude to warrant reconsideration of the decision, and shall study the evidence submitted in writing by the school. The Administrative Committee shall then submit to the Board of Directors of the Association its report and recommendations together with the allegations and the evidence received from the school. Thereupon the Board of Directors of the Association having considered the allegations, the supporting evidence, and the recommendations of the Administrative Committee, shall take final action on the request for reconsideration.

Section E—ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES

I. Published List of Accredited Schools

A list by states of all schools accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools shall be published annually in the Summer issue of the North Central Association *Quarterly*.

II. State Committee Organization and Functions

1. The State Committees shall consist of:

   a. A member of the college or school of education in a state university, an educator holding an assignment in school administration, curriculum, or supervision relating to any type of school accredited by the Commission on Schools.

      NOTE: Upon petition by the State Committee to the Administrative Committee, the university representative may be centered in an institution of higher education other than a state university.

   b. A member of the state department of education holding a major assignment in school administration, curriculum, instruction, or evaluation relating to any type of school accredited by the Commission on Schools.

   c. Administrators from member secondary schools according to the following ratios:

Under 100 schools	4
100 to 299 schools	5
300 to 499 schools	6
500 schools and over	7

      When there are ten or more member schools in the state from any other category of schools accredited by the NCA Commission on Schools, administrators representing those schools shall be added to the State Committee according to the following ratios:

10 to 59 schools	1
60 to 99 schools	2
100 to 199 schools	3
200 to 299 schools	4
300 to 499 schools	5
500 schools and over	6

      These administrators shall be principals, superintendents, or other administrators (assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, etc.) having primary responsibility for administration, instruction, and supervision. At all times, at least 50% of the administrators must be principals. The administrators shall be representative of the various enrollment sizes of schools and shall be

distributed geographically throughout the state.

2. The Chairman of the State Committee shall be the representative of an eligible institution of higher education or of the state department of education, and shall be elected by a majority vote of the State Committee, subject to the approval of the Commission on Schools. He shall be elected for a term of four years and shall be eligible to succeed himself but may continue in office only as long as he is a member of the State Committee.

3. In addition to the above representation, a State Committee may appoint an Associate State Chairman for each class of schools for which the Commission has established a separate set of standards. Such Associate State Chairmen shall be exclusive of the representation noted above and shall be voting members of the State Committee.

4. When the total school membership in a state exceeds 400, the State Committee may appoint an Adjutant State Chairman as a general assistant to the State Chairman. This Adjutant State Chairman shall be exclusive of any of the representation noted above and shall be a voting member of the State Committee.

5. The Chairman of the State Committee is the official agent of communication between member schools in his state and the Commission on Schools. He is responsible to the Commission for the distribution, collection, and filing of reports and for such other duties as may be necessary to conduct the business of the Commission. In the event of a vacancy in the chairmanship, the State Committee shall elect a Chairman to complete the unexpired term.

III. The Commission on Schools

The Commission on Schools is the legal governing body of the Commission. Its major purpose is to represent the member schools in their relations with the Association and to encourage and assist these schools in the development, maintenance, and continued improvement of an educational program that will satisfy the needs, interests, and abilities of individual students. The Commission on Schools is composed of the members of the Administrative Committee, the nineteen State Committees, and the American Dependents' Schools Committee. The officers of the Administrative Committee serve as the officers of the Commission.

IV. The Administrative Committee

The authority for interpreting policies and standards and for conducting the affairs of the Commission on

Schools between its official business meetings is the Administrative Committee.

The Administrative Committee is headed by a Chairman, a Vice Chairman, and a Past Chairman, each elected for one-year terms. Voting members consist of one representative for the State Chairmen, one state department of education representative, one university representative, three member school administrators, one representative of junior high/middle schools, one representative of non-public schools, one representative of large urban districts, the three representatives of the Commission to the NCA Board of Directors (one school administrator, one State Chairman, one open position), and the officer of the Association (President, Vice President, or Past President) representing the Commission on Schools. At all times seven of the voting members of the Administrative Committee must be school administrators, with the majority being principals.

In addition, the Administrative Committee may invite to sit with it on a regular basis one representative of vocational/occupational secondary schools, one from adult high schools, one from elementary schools, and one from optional schools or special function schools. These representatives will be without vote until at least 100 member schools are enrolled in the particular category. When school membership in a particular category exceeds 1,000, additional representation on the Administrative Committee is accorded those particular schools on a proportional basis.

Members of the Administrative Committee are elected for three-year terms by paper ballot at the annual business meeting of the Commission. Two candidates must be provided for each position. Nominations are made by the State Committees. The Executive Secretary of the Commission is an ex officio member of the Administrative Committee without power of vote.

V. New Schools

When in the judgment of the State Committee a school applying for admission to the North Central Association is of sufficient quality, some minor deviations from the standards will be permitted. The specific deviations, however, shall be reported to the Commission for its final action at the annual business meeting. This provision applies to all categories of schools. A school may apply for membership in the North Central Association the same year it graduates its first class.

VI. Consolidated Schools

With the concurrence of the State Committee, a consolidated school may claim continuing membership in the North Central Association provided that at least one of the schools involved in the consolidation was a member of the North Central Association at the time of the consolidation. There must be no break in membership, however. The consolidated school shall be expected to meet all NCA membership standards as fully as would any other member school. The State Committee will determine whether the newly consolidated school must undergo a full-stage evaluation.

VII. Accreditation Under a Different Set of Standards

A member school so reorganized that it is no longer eligible under the set of standards by which it entered the North Central Association must apply for new membership under the appropriate set of standards. The procedures for handling the application are determined by the State Committee, which may or may not require the full evaluation process preliminary to membership.

VIII. Postponement of an Evaluation to Another Cycle

If a member school is granted a postponement of its evaluation to the next cycle, it must conduct a second evaluation during that cycle to keep it in phase.

IX. Transfer of Professional Personnel

Teachers and other professional personnel in school systems having two or more member high schools who are transferred from one school to another and who have been previously approved by the Commission will continue to be approved if they are assigned to the same teaching fields or professional duties. In the case of older teachers who may not have been fully qualified, the administration should encourage them to continue their educational preparation.

X. Equivalency Certificates Based on General Educational Developmental Tests

Diplomas or Certificates of Equivalency of High School Graduation will be recognized by the Association only when they are issued by or on the authority of a state department of public instruction. Such diplomas or certificates should not indicate graduation from any particular high school.

XI. Standard Disclaimer Page for Written Evaluation Reports

(In an effort to preclude the improper use of evaluation reports, the following page is to be included in all Commission reports:)

Limitations on the Distribution, Use, and Scope of This Document

It is the official intent of the Administrative Committee of the North Central Association Commission on Schools that this report on the evaluation of the school be considered a privileged document, to be submitted by the State Chairman's office or by the chairman of the evaluation team directly to the administration of the school. The distribution of the report and its availability for public consideration beyond that point rests solely in the hands of those administrators. Neither the chairman nor the other members of the evaluation team are authorized to release any of the information contained in this report without the express approval of the administration of the school.

The prime concern of the evaluation team has been to determine the actual situation as it exists in the school and not to pass judgment on the professional personnel involved. Hence neither the total report nor any of its subsections is to be considered an appraisal of any individual staff member, but rather an objective description of existing circumstances as they appear to trained and experienced schoolmen.

Moreover, the use of this report as an official assessment of any staff person's professional competency would be in violation of the professional ethics under which a school evaluation is to be conducted. *A fortiori* such a use would be inherently invalid, since at no time during the evaluation process has the evaluation team been concerned with the appraisal of individual school personnel.

The members of the evaluation team have voluntarily placed their professional judgment in balance in arriving at the conclusions reported in this document. They are willing to support the thoughtful evaluations they have made, provided the report is used appropriately. They are not to be held accountable for any injudicious or unauthorized use of this document.

Section F
RULINGS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

I. Split (Double) Sessions

Double sessions are not approved except in emergencies and then only temporarily; evidence must be presented showing that plans have been made to remedy the situation.

II. Host Nation Teachers and Foreign Nationals

a. Qualified host nation teachers may be permitted to teach a second foreign language, and qualified third nationals may teach a foreign language where explanation of the circumstances is provided by the school.

b. Native teachers, if qualified according to the standards, may be employed to teach in adult evening high schools.

III. Graduates of an Institution Prior to its Accreditation

An individual graduating from a college or university prior to the time of its accreditation is not a graduate of an accredited institution. In order to validate a degree earned at an unaccredited institution, an administrator must enroll in an accredited institution and pursue a recommended program until the M.A. degree is awarded.

IV. Proficiency Examinations

a. A teacher may qualify to teach a certain subject by taking and passing a proficiency examination provided an accredited college certifies that the teacher has demonstrated competency equal to one having completed the required preparation.

b. Successful completion of an advanced course in typewriting and or shorthand will demonstrate proficiency.

V. Use of Lay Aides and Paraprofessionals

Lay aides and paraprofessionals may be used in the school wherever it is legal and appropriate.

VI. Definition of School Year

The school year for participation in contests and activities is officially defined as the date a school opens in the fall and closes in the spring, including vacations during this time period.

APPENDIX A

PREPARATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The following are NCA requirements for professional staff, as detailed in Standard IV of the *Policies and Standards for Secondary Schools* and Standard V of the *Policies and Standards for Junior High/Middle Schools*. If a school's organization falls outside these designations, its administrators should consult with the NCA State Chairman to determine the requirements that prevail for its teachers.

Standard IV—PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Teachers

(All standards apply to professional staff employed after the adoption of these new standards, September 1, 1969. A person may qualify for the position he now holds under the old standards, but when he changes to a new position, even in the same school, he must meet fully the current requirements for the new position.)

4.1 *Degree and Legal Standards.* All teachers shall hold a baccalaureate degree from an institution accredited by a regional accrediting association, and shall meet the legal standards for teachers in the state in which they are employed. Graduates of non-accredited institutions may have their undergraduate work validated by admittance to graduate standing and completion of a minimum of five semester hours of credit in a regionally accredited graduate college.

4.11 *Graduate Work from Accredited Institutions.* Wherever in these standards a master's degree or graduate work is required, the work must have been taken in a regionally accredited institution. Work in a foreign university will be accepted only if the work is evaluated by the graduate division of a regionally-accredited university and is declared the equivalent of similar graduate work in an American institution. The graduate division must also declare that the foreign university is an established and internationally recognized institution.

4.2 *General Preparation.* All teachers shall have at least 40 semester hours of work in general education well distributed over such fields as English, history, social science, mathematics, fine arts, languages, science, philosophy, religion, and psychology.

4.3 *Professional Preparation.* All teachers shall have had student teaching or served an internship as part of an approved teacher education program in a higher institution accredited by one of the six regional accrediting associations and shall have satisfactorily completed course work in such areas as the learning process, measurement, philosophy, psy-

chology, social foundations, and curriculum totaling at least 18 semester hours. Satisfactory teaching experience may be substituted for the student teaching requirement where state certification permits.

(*Interpretation*: If teaching experience is offered in lieu of student teaching, up to six hours of professional preparation will be waived, in accordance with the practice prevailing in the specific state and provided the teacher is fully certificated by the state.)

4.4 *Teaching Fields.* Teachers in the following fields shall have the minimum number of semester hours of credit hereinafter prescribed in order to qualify for teaching assignments in their respective fields.

Teaching Field or Subject:

(A teacher may qualify to teach a certain subject by taking and passing a proficiency examination, provided an accredited college certifies that the teacher has demonstrated competency equal to one having completed the required preparation.)

4.40 AGRICULTURE—24 semester hours in agriculture.

4.41 ART—24 semester hours in art.

4.42 BUSINESS—24 semester hours in business with at least one college course in each high school subject to which he is assigned.

4.43 CORE OR BLOCK-OF-TIME—24 semester hours appropriately distributed among the subjects included in the core or block-of-time.

4.44 ENGLISH—An English teacher shall have at least 24 semester hours in English. These shall include an appropriate distribution of courses in literature and composition. Five semester hours in speech and/or journalism may be counted toward meeting this requirement.

4.45 FOREIGN LANGUAGES—20 semester hours in each foreign language to which a teacher is assigned. One semester hour may be allowed for each unit of high school foreign language, but not to exceed two hours.

4.46 HEALTH—A teacher of health must first qualify under these standards for some specific teaching field and must have at least 8 hours of health-related courses. A full major in health alone (20 semester hours) will qualify a teacher under this requirement.

4.47 HOME ECONOMICS—24 semester hours in home economics.

4.48 HUMANITIES—24 semester hours of courses appropriately distributed among subjects included in the course. Because this course often includes such areas as art, music, literature, philosophy, and social studies, members of a team responsible for the course shall be qualified in the areas they are teaching.

4.49 INDUSTRIAL ARTS—20 semester hours in industrial arts including at least one course in each subject taught.

(*Interpretation*: Teachers of drafting, general drawing, or mechanical drawing are approved under this standard. They may also qualify by combining art and/or industrial arts to make 20 semester hours. If an individual has qualified in the field, five semester hours in drawing is sufficient.)

4.50 JOURNALISM—A major in journalism of 24 semester hours or more, or a minimum of five semester hours in journalism plus sufficient additional work in related fields to total at least 24 semester hours.

4.51 MATHEMATICS—20 semester hours of credit in mathematics which need not correspond to high school courses to which a teacher is assigned. One semester hour may be allowed for each unit of high school mathematics, but not to exceed two hours.

4.52 MUSIC—24 semester hours in music.

4.53 PHYSICAL EDUCATION—20 semester hours in physical education.

4.54 READING—A major in reading of at least 24 semester hours, or a minimum of one course in reading plus sufficient additional work in English and/or related fields to total at least 24 semester hours.

4.55 RELIGIOUS STUDIES (Non-Doctrinal) — A teacher of non-doctrinal religious studies must meet the NCA requirements for a teacher of English, social studies, or humanities, with at least six semester hours in religious studies appropriate to the specific courses being taught by the teacher.

4.56 SCIENCE—24 semester hours in the field of science, appropriately distributed in the subjects to which the teacher is assigned. Teachers of highly specialized elective subjects shall have had training

and/or experience sufficient to qualify them for assignment to teach such specialized electives, subject to the approval of the State Committee.

4.57 SOCIAL STUDIES—24 semester hours in the field of social studies, appropriately distributed in the subjects to which the teacher is assigned. Teachers of highly specialized elective subjects shall have had training and/or experience sufficient to qualify them for assignment to teach such specialized electives, subject to the approval of the State Committee.

4.58 SPEECH—A major of 24 semester hours or more in speech and dramatic arts or a minimum of eight semester hours in speech plus sufficient additional work in English to total at least 24 semester hours.

4.59 DRIVER EDUCATION, INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION (VOCATIONAL), REMEDIAL TEACHERS, SPECIAL EDUCATION, AND OTHERS—Teachers of these subjects, and of all other subjects for which NCA requirements have not been established, will be approved by the Commission if they hold a certificate for the respective field issued by the state in which they are teaching. In the absence of such state certification, approval is left to the judgment of the State Committee.

Staffing and Salaries:

4.60 PUPIL-PROFESSIONAL STAFF RATIO—The ratio of pupils to teachers and other professional staff members shall not exceed 25 to 1. Only that portion of a staff member's time actually devoted to duties in the high school may be counted in determining the pupil-teacher ratio. The number of teachers employed in the high school shall be adequate to provide effective instruction, direction of extra-classroom activities, counseling, and other educational services.

4.61 TEACHING LOAD—The teaching load shall be such that teachers have adequate time to perform their duties. Except in certain activity-type classes such as typewriting, physical education, and music, the average pupil load for teachers within a department shall not exceed 160 pupils daily for the long period nor 170 pupils daily for the short period.

NOTE: When a number of staff members are involved in a cooperative teaching project, the amount of each person's involved time shall be counted in computing the individual teacher's load.

Exceptions to the provisions of this standard may be approved by State Committees where evidence is submitted that teachers are regularly provided with clerical and/or para-professional help for non-teaching duties.

4.62 PREPARATION PERIOD—Within the six-hour day, each teacher's schedule shall include one period daily or not less than 200 minutes per week for conferences and instructional planning.

(*Interpretation*: The preparation period must be included within the framework of the total school day. The standard does not apply to people involved in special services such as administrators, counselors, librarians, and certain kinds of vocational teachers as approved by the State Committee.)

4.63 PREPARATION RECORDS—Official transcripts for all professional staff members shall be on file in the office of the administrative head of the school system or of the member secondary school principal.

4.64 SALARIES—Professional school personnel shall be paid salaries adequate to permit a standard of living appropriate for professional persons in the community in which they are employed and which make possible continued professional improvement. Salaries shall provide incentive for personnel to obtain advanced professional preparation.

Special Professional Service Personnel

4.70 COUNSELOR—Professional staff members employed as guidance counselors shall have at least 18 semester hours of graduate preparation in guidance and counseling in addition to teaching experience.

4.71 PROFESSIONAL MEDIA PERSONNEL—Librarians shall meet the classroom teacher requirements with reference to degree and professional preparation and also shall have a minimum of 18 semester hours of library science.

Persons employed principally as audio-visual specialists shall have at least 12 semester hours of credit in this field.

4.72 HEALTH PERSONNEL—Members of the non-instructional professional staff providing health services shall meet the health certification requirements of the state in which the school is located.

Administrative and Supervisory Personnel

(The following requirements for specific administrative positions shall not apply to any qualified administrator who held the corresponding position in either an NCA or a non-NCA school prior to September 1, 1969, provided such person met the NCA standards for that position which were in force immediately prior to that date. The requirements shall be applicable to all new administrative personnel employed for the first time in an administrative capacity on and after September 1, 1969, and to those administrators changing to a position requiring additional training.)

4.80 SUPERINTENDENT—The superintendent who is the administrative head of the school system shall have earned at least 60 hours of graduate credit, inclusive of the master's degree. Not less than 30 semester hours of graduate credit shall have been in administration, supervision, and related fields. He shall have had a minimum of four years of professional experience.

4.81 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT — Assistant superintendents in charge of curriculum, instruction, and general administration shall have earned at least 45 hours of graduate credit, inclusive of the master's degree, with major emphasis in administration and supervision.

4.82 PRINCIPAL—The principal shall have earned at least 45 hours of graduate credit, inclusive of the master's degree. Not less than 20 semester hours of graduate credit shall have been in administration, curriculum, supervision, and related fields. He shall have had a minimum of two years of successful teaching experience.

4.83 ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL—Assistant principals in charge of curriculum, instruction, and general administration (as required in Standard 2.82) shall have at least the master's degree including training in secondary school administration, supervision, curriculum, and guidance. Other administrative assistants shall have training or experience appropriate to their responsibilities.

4.84 SUPERVISORS — Secondary school supervisors working in such areas as curriculum and instruction, testing, special education, speech, music, library, and vocational education shall hold a master's degree with major preparation in the fields in which they are serving.

5.0 THE STAFF

5.1 ***Statement of Principle***—**The foundation of quality education in the junior high or middle school derives from a professional staff committed to education of the pre- and early adolescent. The staff has internalized the philosophy of the junior high or middle school and is equipped with the necessary skills for meeting the needs of the pre-and early adolescent. It views learning as modification of behavior through experience, and evaluation as measurement of outcomes in terms of changes in attitudes and behavior. It recognizes the survival of mankind and the guarantee of human rights as the supreme purposes of education, and the achievement of these purposes as coming through the cultivation and strengthening of democratic processes. It makes unremitting effort to enable each boy and girl to experience and practice democracy.**

5.2 "A" Standards Related to Structure

5.20 The superintendent who is the administrative head of the school system **shall** have earned at least 60 hours of graduate credit, inclusive of the master's degree. Not less than 30 semester hours of graduate credit **shall** have been in administration, supervision, and related fields. He **shall** have had a minimum of four years of professional experience.

5.21 Assistant superintendents in charge of curriculum, instruction, and general administration shall have earned at least 45 hours of graduate credits, inclusive of the master's degree, with major emphasis in administration and supervision.

Note:
The requirements set forth in 5.20 and 5.21 for superintendent and assistant superintendent shall not apply to any qualified administrator who held the corresponding position in either an NCA or a non-NCA school prior to September 1, 1969, provided such person met the NCA standards for that position which were in force immediately prior to that date. (Those standards were listed in the Policies and Criteria for the Approval of Secondary Schools, 1968-69.)

5.22 The principal **shall** hold a master's degree and have at least 20 semester hours of graduate work in professional education with major emphasis on administration, curriculum, and supervision. This preparation **shall** include study in the fields of educational philosophy, psychology, supervision, curriculum, and administration. Preparation should include emphasis on the junior high and middle school and on the psychology of pre- and early adolescence. He should have had teaching experience in the junior high or middle school.

5.23 Other administrative, supervisory, and consultant personnel **shall** hold a baccalaureate degree with special training in the area of their assignment and

should have had teaching experience in the junior high or middle school.

5.24 The staff **shall** consist of at least one certificated person for each 25 students and should consist of at least one certificated person for each 20 students.

(Interpretive Note—This ratio places a premium on effective deployment of staff with some assurance for efficiency. Priorities established in school and course objectives preclude the establishment of a recommended, or optimal, "average" class size.)

5.25 All teachers, counselors, reading specialists, and librarians **shall** hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited institution, evidence adequate professional education preparation, meet the regular certification standards of their own states, and **shall** be assigned to teach only in areas for which they are prepared. Graduates of non-accredited institutions may have their undergraduate work validated by admittance to graduate standing and completion of a minimum of five semester hours of credit in a regionally accredited graduate college.

(Interpretive Notes:

(1) Until such time as teachers are available with specific preparation and certification for teaching in the junior high and middle school, where regular state standards permit the following guidelines **shall** prevail:

a. Teachers with preparation and certification for junior high or middle schools may teach all subjects and levels for which their certificates are endorsed; and/or

b. Teachers in junior high or middle schools may teach any subject for which they have a minimum of 18 semester hours of preparation in the field, appropriately distributed, subject to the approval of the State Committee; and/or

c. Teachers with elementary school certification may teach any subject for which they have appropriate preparation and/or experience, subject to the approval of the State Committee.

(2) Driver education, special education, industrial education (vocational), work experience teachers, and teachers of all other subjects for which NCA requirements have not been established will be approved by the Commission if they hold a valid certificate for the respective field issued by the state in which they are teaching. In the absence of such state certification, approval is left to the judgment of the State Committee.)

5.26 Wherever in these standards a master's degree or graduate work is required, the work **must** have been taken in a regionally accredited institution. Work in a foreign university will be accepted only if the work is evaluated by the graduate division of a regionally accredited university and is declared the equivalent of similar graduate work in an American institution. The graduate division must also declare that the foreign institution is an established and internationally recognized institution.

5.27 Junior high and middle school teachers should have completed, in their pre-service and/or in-service training, professional study that provides them with understandings of the junior high and middle school and the needs of the pre- and early adolescent.

(Interpretive Note—All teachers should have completed study in the following essential areas: the junior high and middle school, psychology [learning theory, human growth and development and the pre- and early adolescent]; guidance and evaluation [test construction and interpretation, parent conferences, evaluation of pupil growth, guidance and counseling]; developmental reading; instructional media; and breadth of preparation that supports the specific training needed in the teaching assignment.)

5.28 A minimum of 200 minutes of scheduled time **shall** be provided each week for each teacher for individual planning and/or preparation, and consultation.

(Interpretive Note—Professional special services personnel such as administrators, counselors, librarians, reading teachers, and teachers in self-contained classrooms are excluded from this requirement.)

5.29 Adequate supportive staff (clerical, custodial, food service, transportation, etc.) **shall** be provided so that the certificated staff may perform effectively their professional duties.

THE NATURE OF NCA ACCREDITATION

What is NCA accreditation?

NCA accreditation denotes official membership in the North Central Association, based on the school's ability and willingness to meet and sustain the preconditions for quality expressed in the precise, objective standards established by the Commission on Schools.

In general, what does NCA accreditation signify?

It affirms that objective conditions for quality and progress exist in the school. It attests that the school has the *potentiality* for excellence. Resolve and vision are then needed to convert that potentiality into superior education.

Who establishes the NCA standards for accreditation?

NCA accreditation standards are formulated by school people in the field, state department of education personnel, university professors, and other interested parties. The standards essentially are professional judgments concerning those factors that foster quality in secondary schools.

Does NCA accreditation have any legal significance?

No. NCA accreditation is voluntary, optional, and completely non-official. It reflects the sturdy American trait of cooperative rather than coercive action in seeking to improve our community services.

Should not all schools be accredited?

Again the answer can only be no. While most strong, effective schools eagerly seek regional accreditation, some, for reasons of their own, do not. NCA accreditation implies the voluntary assumption of the requirements and conditions established for membership and school improvement.

Are NCA standards easy to meet?

No. Only about 45% of the high schools in the NCA region currently are members of the NCA, though these schools do graduate over 75% of the students within the region. It is evident that many schools cannot meet the NCA standards.

The goal of NCA accreditation is to upgrade education within the schools of the region. Hence the standards have been set high to compel schools to strain to attain them. It is hoped that this will result in an appreciable enhancement of all schools, whether or not they seek NCA membership.

STEPS TOWARDS MEMBERSHIP IN THE NCA

The authorities of a school seeking to be accredited by the NCA should follow these steps:

1. See that the desirability of membership is discussed thoroughly by the faculty, the principal, the superintendent, and the board of education.
2. Contact the NCA State Chairman for help and further information. (Names and addresses of State Chairmen are available from the Chicago office of the Commission.)
3. Carefully study the standards under which the school is seeking accreditation. Consider the implications for the school and note and correct any deficiencies the school may have in relation to the standards.
4. Make formal application for membership in NCA, with written approval of the local board of education.
5. Conduct a comprehensive self-study either at the time of application or within two years of initial membership, as required by the State Committee.
6. Undergo an evaluation by a team of educators from outside the school district, chaired by an experienced evaluator appointed by the State Chairman. The evaluation team will submit a written report of its findings to the school and to the State Committee.
7. Be recommended by the State Committee to the Commission for accreditation and membership in the NCA at the Annual Meeting.
8. If the school meets NCA standards, the Commission will vote it into membership at that time.
9. Satisfy the stated conditions for continuing membership, by indicating in the annual report the extent to which all standards are being met.
10. Remember that NCA membership simply affirms that the *preconditions* for quality education exist within the school. The quest for better schools for our young people must be an unremitting one.

NCA membership dues:

All member schools except elementary schools, $125 per annum.
Approved by the Commission, March 28, 1973.
Elementary schools: $125 for the first year, then $75 per annum thereafter.
Approved by the Commission, March 25, 1974.

COMMISSION ON SCHOOLS
1974-1975

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PUBLICATIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOLS . . .

that may be of interest to you. Free single copies of all except the first three items are available from the Executive Secretary of the Commission on Schools, 5454 South Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60615.

The NCA Evaluation Guide for Secondary Schools: A Workbook for the Self Study and the Evaluation Review ($8.00)

Leadership for Quality Evaluation: A Manual for the Evaluation Team Chairman ($.50)

A Public Information Kit on NCA Accreditation and Evaluation ($1.00)

Policies and Standards for the Approval of . . .

. . . Secondary Schools

. . . Junior High/Middle Schools

. . . Independent College Preparatory Schools

. . . Vocational/Occupational Secondary Schools

. . . Separately Administered Adult High Schools

. . . Optional Schools/Special Function Schools

Procedures for the Evaluation of Secondary Schools

Procedures for the Evaluation of Junior High/Middle Schools

A Primer on NCA Accreditation: Its Rationale, Its Nature, Its Structure

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